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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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~ VM Labs Goes Chapter 11 ~ People Are Talking! ~ Magic PC Update!
~ Judge Queries MS, U.S.! ~ Odd Todd Cartoon Wins! ~ Anti-spam Measures!
~ Nintendo Sets Price War ~ New Version of XaAES! ~ "My Party" Worm!
~ 1GHz Power Mac G4 Out! ~ PlayStation2 Linux Kit ~ Win 2K Security Fix

-* AOL Blocks Trillian IM Users *-
-* FTC To Crack Down On Deceptive Spam *-
-* EPIC Requests Examination of MS Passport! *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"*****"

As I sit down and write this week's editorial, it's not even Friday yet and the week has had its ups and downs - a real weird week! The weather has been great - temperatures in the 50's and 60's, until today when the cold finally blew in and we're getting some nasty freezing rain and some snow. Typical New England torture! And naturally, our two dogs are begging me to take them out to run in the stuff! But, the nice weather still outweighs the bad so far this winter!

Work has been extremely hectic. The one thing I despise about my job is all of the meetings I end up attending. Most of these meetings are long, and boring. Most of the time the topic barely pertains to the functions of my department, but there's always one remote reason and after maybe 3-4 meetings, that topic arises. By then I'm ready for the asylum! This week was one full of such meetings. And they wonder why we can't get any work done! And I had some employee issues, which are always stressful.

Not much else going on! Oh yeah, big game on Sunday! I'm rooting for the Patriots, but not because I'm from New England. I'm actually not a big Pats fan, but since the Rams beat my team, the Eagles, I'm rooting for their opponent. And, I don't like the Pats' Bledsoe so I'm rooting for the young upstart quarterback, Tom Brady!

Until next time...

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MagiC PC update

Hi all,

You may want to know that the update from MagiC PC 6.10 to 6.20 is available on ASH web site:

<http://www.application-systems.de/download/magicpc/MPC620.zip>

Best regards,
P. Ricard (ES)
--
Europe Shareware <http://www.europe-shareware.org>

XaAES v0.940

There is a new version available on my homepage (url in sig)

- 1 Less uglier logo.
- 2 Fixed a small inconsistency in the hiding mechanism.
This affects windows that are partly outside the left side of the screen.
- 3 Fix in unhiding after an app terminates.
- 4 Bug in the debugger ;-). Default debug points got lost. Fixed.
- 5 Nice arrows for sliders.
- 6 WF_SCREEN buffer handling improved. See history file.
- 7 Implemented a simple and mostly safe shut down procedure.
It uses the task manager. See history file.
- 8 Apps that issue multiple appl_init/exit pairs run again.
Notably LINES & PRGFLAGS
- 9 The task manager is now also updated when creating clients.
New config command:

open task manager

The task manager is opened as soon as possible in bootup.
Nice demonstration.
- 10 Implemented sizing by grabbing any border or corner of a window.
The window must be moveable AND sizeable.

New operand to the option 'windows'

thickframe

The most outer frame of a window will be 1 pixel wider.
Makes it just that easier to grab the border.

NB!

The folder 'widgets' has a lot more widgets.
Newer were supplied by Patrick Prokopowicz.

The source distribution comprises a surrounding folder 'XAAES940'.

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Groeten; Regards.
Henk Robbers.

h.robbers@chello.nl
<http://members.ams.chello.nl/h.robbers/Home.html>
A free multitasking GEM for MiNT: XaAES (heavily under construction);
<http://xaaes.atari.org>

EmuTOS Beta Release!

Dear Atari Community!

We are happy to announce the first beta release of EmuTOS.

INTRODUCTION

EmuTOS is a single-user single-tasking operating system for the 32 bit Atari computer emulators. It is thought as a replacement for the TOS-images you usually need today for using emulators and it is also running on some real hardware, like the Atari Mega STE. All is open and maybe it is also running on totally new machines in the future.

EmuTOS is being developed for more than a year now and is licensed under the OpenSource Gnu General Public Licence (GPL).

DESCRIPTION

EmuTOS is basically made up of four parts:

- The BIOS, which is the basic input output system
- The XBIOS, which provides the interface to the hardware
- The BDOS, which are the high level OS routines, what you know as GEMDOS
- The shell command.prg we use, as long we have no GEM

The BIOS and XBIOS code is our own development. It is really written from scratch and implements nearly all of the TOS 1.0 BIOS functionality, and a bit more, like e.g. hard disk access and STE sampled sound. A few things like printing, midi and serial stuff is missing for now, but may be implemented somewhere in the future.

The GEMDOS part is based on Digital Research's GEMDOS sources, which were made available under GPL licence in 1999 by Caldera. None of the graphical parts like VDI and AES are implemented. Instead we plan to use fVDI and an extra AES, like XaAES (just on MiNT) which together with a desktop make the GEM you all know and love.

Since EmuTOS just implements the TOS's functionality, you might want to use MiNT on it in order to run more modern software. EmuTOS is not an alternative to MiNT. But EmuTOS is the only free base OS to boot MiNT.

EMULATION AND FUTURE PLATFORM

EmuTOS and MiNT cooperate well. For the future we plan, that both can make use of a yet to implement standard native call interface for emulators. When running EmuTOS in an emulator, this interface will provide access to use the power of the underlying OS kernel. It may allow using modern 3D graphics cards, will provide fast native file system access and will enable you to use networking with all bells and whistles - and many things more you always dreamed of.

This is, what EmuTOS is made for: A free OS, that can evolve. Progress has been fast up to now, because we have a small, but enthusiastic development team and are eager to see EmuTOS running with GEM and all.

HARDWARE

Making EmuTOS running natively on a new hardware platform is more or less just a question of driver support for EmuTOS. The same for MiNT, if you'd like to have it running over EmuTOS.

This is the currently supported Hardware:

- CPU support for m68000, m68010, m68020, m68030, m68040
- FPU detected
- Memory controller (both ST and Falcon)
- Monitor type detection (mono or not)
- WD 1772 Floppy disk controller (write track not tested)
- DMA controller
- MFP
- PSG
- ST shifter
- STE shifter (partially)
- ACIAs, IKBD protocol (mouse not tested)
- MegaST Real-Time Clock (set clock not tested)
- NVRAM (including RTC)
- DMA sound

AVAILABILITY

EmuTOS has its home at sourceforge:

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/emutos>

A ready made EmuTOS image or the source can be downloaded from:

http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=36560

It is always available in source form from our CVS server at:

http://sourceforge.net/cvs/?group_id=36560

If you are just curious or would like to help us develop this nice little OS, you are invited to subscribe to our Mailing list for developers at:

http://sourceforge.net/mail/?group_id=36560

Hope, you like EmuTOS. If you have any suggestions or comments, we always like to hear the good and also the bad things about it.

Your EmuTOS development team.

--

written by Martin Doering
<http://emutos.sourceforge.net/>

ARAnyM v0.0.20 has just been released.

ARAnyM = Atari Running on Any Machine

There were hundreds of changes and many improvements.

2002/01/28 - version 0.0.20 released

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ARAnyM is at least +33% faster than the previous release. We greatly optimized the CPU memory access time and also interrupt emulation.

ARAnyM runs with the SDL TimerThread by default again. This gives us more flexibility (see the STOP sign below) and is necessary for the upcoming JIT CPU (just-in-time compilation of m68k code).

ARAnyM supports STOP instruction that put the CPU to sleep. This works perfectly in latest EmuTOS (CVS version). ARAnyM does not eat CPU cycles when the EmuTOS is idle.

ARAnyM configuration file changed its location and got more options: all ARAnyM user files are now located in \$HOME/.aranym/ folder. The configuration file is named "config" (thus the complete path is \$HOME/.aranym/config). The configuration file is created automatically if it is not found. The old \$HOME/.aranymrc is not read, you have to update your new config file by hand.

New noteworthy command line options include "--refresh " where you can specify the VIDEL refresh.

ARAnyM now contains special support for native harddrive access from EmuTOS. This allows EmuTOS to actually boot from a harddrive attached to ARAnyM machine.

Many many fixes - in floppy (formatting works), fVDI driver (colors after resolution change), NVRAM (year 2002 not 2001), MFP (TimerC) and more.

Great thing for all Debian users - ARAnyM is now included in Debian Sid distribution.

Last but not least - ARAnyM runs under Windows as well. You can compile the released source code with Cygwin to get Windows executable.

Look into ChangeLog for more details.

<http://aranym.sourceforge.net/>

For more about what ARAnyM is read the extended text below.

The main goal of the project is to create a virtual machine that would allow everyone to run current 32bit Atari ST/TT/Falcon applications on their computer regardless if it's an IBM clone (read it as "PC" :-), an Apple, an Unix server, a graphics workstation or even a portable computer.

We modeled the virtual machine after the most advanced Atari computer equipped with the latest hardware extensions - that is Falcon030 with Afterburner040 (bringing the CPU to MC68040) and a graphics card. But we don't stop there - the virtual machine will be extended to allow developing

new powerful TOS/GEM applications and will become the new platform for all current and previous Atari users.

To create the virtual machine we started a project named ARAnyM in early 2001. In some three weeks we have been booting to desktop and since then we work on configuration, new features etc. We are seeking for new developers so if you are willing to help us then send a mail to aranym@sophics.cz.

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, Mother Nature is again proving that she's got a sense of humor. After almost a week of higher-than-normal temperatures (and two days of all-time record-breaking high temperatures), she's decided to thump us with normal temperatures and sleet and freezing rain. Gotta love a chick with a sense of humor!

On the SETI@home front, I'd like to plead with one or two of you to join TEAM ATARI. We now have 49 people participating, and we've contributed just a little over 71 years of CPU time to the search for extraterrestrial life. Seventy one years!

The reason I'm begging for another member or two isn't really to raise the contributed CPU time. It's simply because "Fifty contributors" sounds a lot better than "Forty nine contributors". If you're interested in joining up, you can take a look at TEAM ATARI's stats at:

http://iosef.ssl.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin/cgi?cmd=team_lookup&name=Team+Atari

For information on the SETI@home project itself, visit:
<http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu>

The only other thing I'd like to mention this week is that it's been brought to out attention (again) that AtariNews.Org has been loading more and more slowly. We're taking steps to correct the situation.

Well, let's get on with the news and STuff from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Don Wolfe asks for help with 1STGuide:

"I'm trying to figure out how to print with 1STGUIDE.PRG, and also what is the latest Version?"

Mark Duckworth tells Don:

"The author of 1stguide has agreed to release the sources but so far I've not seen them on his webpage, <http://sylvana.net/1stguide/> So we wait patiently. Once we have the sources though, we not only have the latest version but can add printing support if it doesn't exist."

Edward Baiz adds:

"I have version 4.2. I thought this program was just for viewing. What is it that you want to print?"

Don tells Edward:

"Put the Mouse on the program and click the right button and hold and a configure menu comes up and the next level down is the print menu but it is all in german and I can't make it work??"

A picture I was viewing in 1STGUIDE looked good, so I loaded it into IMAGECOPY 4 to print, but IMAGECOPY showed it real dark, and not being good with IMAGECOPY I couldn't get it to look normal. So I tried 1STGUIDE. Not sure what version I have, I downloaded it in 97 ??

Grzegorz Pawlik adds:

"..or you may just press Ctrl-P to send the displayed picture to the printer. But the only thing it works with are monochrome images (at least for me)."

Greg Goodwin asks about checking RAM on an ST:

"I need a program that will tell me how much ram a St is currently running. I have a guy in my area who inherited a ST and he wants to know if it is possibly upgraded or not."

Ireneusz Pełech lists a couple of easy possibilities:

"For example SysInfo, GemBench."

Kenneth Medin adds:

"Or why not use GENERAL.CPX in the Control Panel."

Hallvard Tangeraas adds:

"Download "Profile" from the software section of my Notator website (see signature) which gives all sorts of information about the computer including RAM.

Atari Launchpad : <<http://launchpad.atari.org>>
Notator/Creator SL : <<http://www.notator.org>> "

'Brent' asks for info on connecting an ST to a television:

"I have acquired a 520STFM, with a RCA jack on the back for connection to tv (I assume), can I just take a rca cable and directly plug it into the back of a TV which has a S-Video connector, or do I still need a RF-Modulator or switch box (as I have heard it called). Where would I get one if I needed it?"

Chris Simon tells Brent:

"You should be able to connect it directly. The 'M' in the STFM means that it has a built-in Modulator."

Mark Duckworth tells Chris:

"Yes they do. He was talking about an S-Video connector on the TV. S-Video is similar to composite video (and easily adapted between one another). However the jack on the back of ANY ST is not composite video, it's RF. Meaning he would either need to wire up his 1040 to add an additional jack to get composite video which he could in turn wire to the svideo jack on his tv (which would produce better results), or he would get an rca cable and then a little rca to coax adapter to put on the tv, where the antenna hooks up. Then tune the tv to channel 3 or 4.

I was just trying to specify that he is trying to hook RF from the ST up to composite (svideo) on the TV and that combo does not work without electronics in the middle."

Joseph Place asks about connecting to the internet with WenSuite:

"Has anyone used the PPP connection in Wensuite to connect to Prodigy? I can connect with STing and CAB, but haven't been successful with Wensuite. The docs say to determine a script using a terminal program, but Prodigy won't authenticate me with a terminal program either."

Mark Duckworth tells Joseph:

"If you can't negotiate a session with a terminal program, then they probably use PAP or CHAP authentication, which are not human readable.

What do you see when it connects (with a terminal program). I know iconnect supports PAP and I think STiNG does too, which would explain why they work and wensuite does not."

Joseph tells Mark:

"I have 3.30b, which I downloaded from the website, and used my serial number from an older version.

In the terminal program, I see Username: Password:, when I enter the username and password it says that they are an incorrect match. After three tries, it disconnects. I would think that with PAP or CHAP I would see non-readable text.

Mark tells Joseph:

"Interesting,

PAP and CHAP actually will not appear without sending a packet. i.e. it will send out that text prompt but your machine when connecting would start sending ppp garbage and their terminal server would be listening for it. I would assume that is how authentication is done properly, but at this point I don't know what to tell you."

Joseph replies:

"I found that I was dialing a different number than I usually dial with my ST. I thought all the numbers would respond the same, but when I dialed the one I usually dial with the ST, I connected. Very strange.

Perhaps they are using different types of modems on different lines."

Henk Robbers posts this about XaAES:

"There is a new version available on my homepage (url in sig)

1 Less ugly logo.

2 Fixed a small inconsistency in the hiding mechanism.

This affects windows that are partly outside the left side of the screen.

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NB!

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Newer were supplied by Patrick Prokopowicz.

The source distribution comprises a surrounding folder 'XAAES940'.

<http://xaaes.atari.org> "

Axel Jakob Scherer tells Henk:

"I tried to install Xaaes on my Stemulator. (The ST Emulator from "Falkemedia")

PlayStation 2, which hit the shelves in Europe in November 2000, has been priced since last September at \$280 in Britain and \$264, in France.

"It is our basic policy to offer our game machines at a reasonable price for our customers even though it will result in a relatively low profit margin," said Yoshihiro Mori, managing director of Nintendo.

GameCube's European launch is expected to fuel a three-way global war among the consoles, which is already raging in the United States and set to begin in Japan next month when Xbox debuts here.

GameCube was launched in Japan last September, followed by its North American debut in November.

Nintendo, the world's second-biggest console manufacturer and largest maker of game software, said it aimed to ship 500,000 GameCubes on the first day, along with 20 software titles including its popular "Super Smash Bros. Melee."

But Mori declined to give the company's sales target for the first year in Europe.

"We plan to accelerate our sales in Europe as well as the rest of the world toward Christmas by increasing our output significantly from summer," he said.

Nintendo, known for its Pokemon character, also said it would cut the price of its Game Boy Advance (GBA) mobile game machine globally on February 1 in a bid to accelerate sales, particularly in Europe.

The price would be reduced to 8,800 yen (\$65) from 9,800 yen in Japan, to \$79.95 from \$99.95 in North America, and to 99 euros from 129 euros in Europe.

Mori said the relatively large price gap between GBA and its predecessor, the Game Boy Color console, had slowed sales of GBA in Europe.

"We figured that if we are going to cut the price of GBA in Europe, we'd better do it worldwide to prevent a potential increase in latent demand outside the region where a similar cut might be expected."

Mori said the price cut was also aimed at boosting the number of GBA users ahead of the planned release later this year of new games that link GBA and GameCube.

As for the impact the price cut would have on its earnings, Mori said: "We expect the lower price will boost GBA sales which should offset some of the negative impact."

"In addition, if the yen stays at the current (low) level, the currency-related gain will be much more than the loss from the reduced price."

Shares in Nintendo closed 1.29 percent lower at 20,730 yen, while the benchmark Nikkei average gained 0.76 percent.

The decline followed Deutsche Securities' lowering of its investment rating on Nintendo to "market perform" from "buy." Deutsche also removed the stock from its Equity Focus list.

Sony Corp said on Wednesday it would start selling Linux operating system kits for Linux programmers around the globe in coming months to allow Linux applications to run on its PlayStation 2 game console.

The consumer electronics giant said it would begin selling disks to install the Linux operating system (OS) on PlayStation 2 and tools to develop Linux applications.

The kits will go on sale in Japan in May and in the United States and Europe in June.

"Many Linux fans have requested that they would like to execute applications not only on personal computers but also on PlayStation game consoles," a Sony spokeswoman said.

The kits will cost \$188.30 in Japan, \$199 in the United States and \$215 in Europe.

Linux, which competes with Microsoft Corp's Windows, is an open-source model and has become a popular master computer program.

Sony aims to expand the role of PlayStation as a platform and allow more applications such as word-processing.

Sony said the kits also included a internal hard disk drive with 40 gigabytes and USB keyboard and mouse.

Sony shares closed down 2.2 percent at 5,790 yen on Wednesday, in line with the benchmark Nikkei which ended down 1.3 percent, breaking below the 10,000 yen level for the first time since October 10.

Doctors Call for Health Warnings on Computer Games

Computer games with vibrating hand-held control devices should carry health warnings because they can cause damage to hands, British doctors said on Friday.

The doctors think parents and children should be aware of potential health problems that could be caused by prolonged use of the devices.

"We believe that, with increasing numbers of children playing these devices, there should be consideration for statutory health warnings to advise users and parents," said Gavin Cleary of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London.

Cleary and his colleagues called for the health warnings in a letter to the British Medical Journal after a 15-year-old boy developed symptoms similar to hand-arm vibration syndrome, which is caused by using industrial tools for long periods of time.

The syndrome was classified as an industrial disease in 1985 and sufferers receive disability benefits and compensation.

The boy, who played computer games with a vibrating control device for up to seven hours a day, suffered pain and swelling in his hands.

Top Economist Critical of Microsoft Settlement

A Nobel prize-winning economist criticized the proposed settlement of the government's antitrust case against Microsoft Corp., as a public comment period closed on Monday.

Stanford University professor Kenneth Arrow said the settlement reached with the U.S. Justice Department and nine states in the case failed to improve competition and would not deter Microsoft from future illegal acts.

Arrow's comments were in a submission to District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly by ProComp, a group funded by Microsoft rivals that favors stronger sanctions against the software giant for illegally maintaining its monopoly in personal computer operating systems.

"No decree that fails to cure that illegality and prevent its recurrence can conceivably serve the public interest," ProComp said.

Arguments in favor of the settlement also drew prominent figures with former attorneys general Griffin Bell and Edwin Meese cited by the Association for Competitive Technology (ACT), a group that includes Microsoft in its membership.

The settlement would require Microsoft to take steps to give computer makers more freedom to feature rival software on their machines and share parts of the inner workings of the Windows operating system with other software makers.

ACT told the judge the settlement would benefit both consumers and industry and warned that harsher sanctions sought by nine other states in the case would only advance the interests of a few Microsoft rivals such as Sun Microsystems Inc., Oracle Corp. and AOL Time Warner Inc.

"The majority of the industry and the majority of consumers think we should put this (case) behind us now," ACT President Jonathan Zuck told Reuters.

Under the Tunney Act, a federal judge must weigh whether government settlements of antitrust suits are in the public interest.

The U.S. Justice Department now has 30 days to submit any responses to the comments.

On March 11, Kollar-Kotelly is due to begin separate hearings into the sanctions proposed by the non-settling states.

The dissenting states have asked Kollar-Kotelly to order Microsoft to sell a cheaper, stripped-down version of Windows and to give competitors access to the inner workings of the Internet Explorer browser.

In addition, the hold-out states want the judge to ensure that Microsoft Office, the popular business software, will be compatible with other software platforms.

AOL, which last week filed a private antitrust suit against Microsoft for damage done to its Netscape Web browser unit, filed a 127-page submission against the proposed settlement.

A coalition of consumer groups, including the Consumer Federation of America and Consumers Union, submitted comment on Friday saying the settlement was ``fundamentally flawed."

Arrow said Microsoft was using its monopoly in personal computer operating systems as a vehicle for expanding its market share in computer servers and to draw consumers to its Web services.

``The PFJ (proposed final judgement) is missing forward-looking remedies that address such efforts by Microsoft to protect and enhance its existing market power," Arrow said.

States Asked to Examine Microsoft Internet Service

A privacy group on Tuesday asked state law enforcement authorities to examine software giant Microsoft Corp.'s Passport online identity service, saying it exposes consumers to fraud, junk electronic mail and identity theft.

The Electronic Privacy Information Center sent a letter to all 50 state attorneys general, asking them to protect consumers against what it called Microsoft's unfair and deceptive trade practices because the federal government has failed to act.

Launched in 1999, Passport aims to simplify Internet transactions by allowing consumers to store passwords, credit-card numbers and other personal information in one location.

Microsoft claims it has created more than 200 million Passport accounts, mostly through Hotmail, its free e-mail service.

The service has drawn the ire of the Electronic Privacy Information Center and other privacy groups, who say it allows Microsoft to track and profile Internet users, encourages junk e-mail, and exposes consumers to identity theft by inadequately protecting their credit-card numbers.

Microsoft temporarily disabled some Passport functions last fall after a security expert demonstrated that he could hijack a Passport account by getting its owner to open a Hotmail message.

Privacy groups want Microsoft to back off on claims that Passport is secure and protects consumer privacy, and allow consumers to delete the accounts they have set up so far.

A Microsoft spokesman said EPIC's allegations were not true.

Microsoft does not share personal information with third parties, said spokesman Rick Miller, unless users voluntarily use Passport to access third-party sites.

Passport does not encourage junk e-mail, Miller said, because it simply replaces other authentication services that would have asked for users' e-mail addresses anyhow.

And no harm has come from security holes because Passport users have not had their credit-card numbers stolen, he said. Perfect security is impossible to guarantee in a world where millions of users are connected on

the Internet, he said.

''It's not a Passport thing, it's an Internet thing," Miller said.

EPIC said it was appealing to the states because the Federal Trade Commission has not taken action since EPIC and other groups asked it to investigate Passport last summer.

An FTC spokesman would not confirm or deny whether the agency was investigating Passport, but added that the agency was aware of the controversy and was following developments in the press.

Chris Hoofnagle, EPIC legislative counsel, said states have often taken a more aggressive approach to privacy matters. Attorneys general in Minnesota and New York have recently pursued banks for privacy violations, and California state law establishes a strong right to privacy, he said.

''The states have been on the forefront of privacy protection and consumer protection generally," Hoofnagle said.

The environmental movement has found success at the state level as well, he said.

EPIC also plans to use European Union privacy laws to go after Passport, Hoofnagle said.

''We will file a complaint with the FTC on that issue in the near future," he said.

Judge Queries Microsoft, U.S. on Settlement Hearing

A federal judge told Microsoft Corp. and the U.S. Justice Department to report next week on whether they want the court to hold a hearing on their proposed settlement of the landmark antitrust case, according to a court order released on Thursday.

The settlement was both praised and criticized in submissions sent to the Justice Department during a 60-day public comment period that closed on Monday.

In addition, while nine states involved in the case have supported the settlement, another nine are pressing for stronger sanctions against Microsoft for illegally maintaining its monopoly in personal computer operating systems.

U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly told Microsoft and the department to outline, among other things, ''the nature of any hearing at which the parties propose to present arguments and/or evidence in support of entry of the (settlement)."

Kollar-Kotelly is required under a U.S. law called the Tunney Act to determine whether the proposed antitrust settlement is in the public interest.

The judge also asked Microsoft and the Justice Department to include in their Feb. 7 report, proposals on participation by third parties in regard to any hearing on the settlement.

Kollar-Kotelly also told Microsoft and the department to be in court on Feb. 8 to discuss the status of the Tunney Act proceedings.

The judge has said she will begin hearings March 11 on the proposals for stiffer sanctions by the nine non-settling states.

A Microsoft spokesman declined comment on whether the company will ask for a separate hearing under the Tunney Act proceedings.

Microsoft Antitrust Delay Sought

A group of antitrust lawyers is asking the judge hearing the Microsoft case to stop the settlement process until she decides whether the company disclosed all relevant lobbying contacts with the government.

The American Antitrust Institute claims that Microsoft didn't comply with a federal statute when the embattled software maker listed only contacts with the executive branch.

The Tunney Act, a 1974 law that covers how federal settlements should be determined to be in the public interest, requires the declaration.

Former Sen. John Tunney, D-Calif., author of the law, also has written the Justice Department that he intended the law to cover all employees of the United States, including congressional members and aides. Microsoft has spent considerable time and money over the life of the antitrust case to lobby Congress.

Microsoft says the disclosure portion of the Tunney Act applies only to the executive branch, relying on the fact that AT&T took the same position in its settlement that resulted in the breakup of the telephone giant.

"We feel the process should move forward, and we look forward to the judge's review of this settlement," said Microsoft spokesman Jim Desler.

Albert Foer, president of the lawyers group, said the request for an injunction and hearing within 20 days will serve as a preliminary indication of whether U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly is willing to consider the institute's position.

"I think we've made a very strong argument that the law has not been complied with," Foer said in an interview.

Nine states and the federal government settled their antitrust charges with Microsoft last year. Kollar-Kotelly is scheduled in March to decide whether to approve the settlement. Nine other states and the District of Columbia are fighting for stronger penalties against the Redmond, Wash., company.

Microsoft Pays States' Legal Bills

Nine states that settled their antitrust lawsuit with Microsoft Corp. finally have reaped benefits from the software maker: about \$10 million to reimburse taxpayers for their legal expenses.

Under federal law, a company found liable for antitrust violations, as Microsoft was after almost four years of litigation, must pay back the states for the cost of prosecution.

The other nine states, which opted not to sign on to the settlement, as well as the District of Columbia, eventually will be reimbursed as well. The law doesn't provide for Microsoft to pay federal litigation expenses, Justice Department spokeswoman Gina Talamona said.

In 1999, a year after the case was filed, the department said it had spent about \$7 million in the Microsoft prosecution.

Not only is Microsoft paying the state taxpayers' tab, but some states may come out ahead because of how the sum is calculated. State attorneys are paid by a fixed salary, but the law states that hourly rates for private attorneys must be used.

"I guess it's probably fair to say that we're getting our market value of our services, even though the state pays our wholesale costs," Wisconsin Assistant Attorney General Kevin O'Connor said. "That's how I look at it."

Wisconsin received \$1.71 million in attorneys' fees, as well as another \$65,000 to reimburse a joint state fund set up by the National Association of Attorneys General. The Associated Press interviewed officials in the attorneys general offices of the nine states that have settled the case to get totals for Microsoft's reimbursements.

The checks sent out this week reflect the amount of involvement by each state. Wisconsin and the other leaders of the settling states - New York, Illinois and Ohio - received the bulk of the money from Microsoft.

New York alone is getting back more than \$4.4 million and is negotiating with Microsoft to cover other expenses. The other states that settled with Microsoft are Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan and North Carolina. A judge is to review the settlement in March.

Some attorneys general were criticized for bringing the antitrust case or for choosing to continue it after inheriting it from predecessors. Getting their money back, which was ensured when a federal appeals court upheld several key points of the government's case, is now a selling point.

"This settlement allows us to get the concessions we wanted, which are more choice and competition, without costing taxpayers a dime," said Eric Hargrove, a spokesman for Ohio Attorney General Betty Montgomery.

For most states, the money is earmarked for future antitrust efforts and consumer protection. A few, such as Kentucky, have laws that let the state legislatures determine how to spend the money.

Microsoft and the states negotiated the expenses, and the talks continue. But the payments will make little dent in the company's bottom line.

Last year, Microsoft held more than \$31 billion in cash and short-term investments.

Microsoft won't say how much it has spent over the course of the case, but in the 2001 fiscal year the company reported spending about \$837 million in "general and administrative costs." It said they have risen in recent

years due to higher legal fees.

''They're not playing with the kind of money that Microsoft is," George Washington University law professor Richard Pierce said of the states.
''This is a tip for a waiter for Microsoft."

States Reimbursed By Microsoft

Image]

The amount each of the nine settling states is receiving from Microsoft:
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-Illinois: \$1,409,320 in attorneys fees, plus about \$150,000 in other
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-Kentucky: \$311,000, plus a possible \$50,000 in miscellaneous fees to be
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-Louisiana: \$57,500

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-Michigan: \$153,000 in attorneys fees, other costs to be determined.
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-New York: \$4,411,817.31, plus an undetermined amount in miscellaneous
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-North Carolina: \$196,472.50

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-Wisconsin: \$1,710,000, plus an extra \$65,000 to reimburse the joint state
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A new computer bug that tries to trick computer users into clicking on a virus-infected Web link masquerading as party photos emerged in Asia on Monday and began spreading to Europe and North America, computer experts said.

The "My Party" worm, which is not considered destructive, spreads by infiltrating popular e-mail software Microsoft Windows Address Book and Outlook Express Database.

The worm e-mails itself to every person in an infected users' e-mail log, making it look as if the worm comes from a colleague or friend, experts said.

The worm is believed to have originated in Russia because it does not infect computers using keyboards with Cyrillic or Russian characters and, when it infects a new machine, it sends an e-mail to a Russian free e-mail account, according to Mikko Hypponen, manager of antivirus research at Finnish-based F-Secure.

The worm, which was first spotted in Singapore, will stop spreading on Wednesday because it was written to spread only between Jan. 25 and Jan. 29, Hypponen added.

It installs a backdoor that downloads commands from a Web site hosted by a U.S.-based Internet service provider, but the commands are benign at this point, he said. Officials are attempting to get the ISP to shut down the Web site, he added.

"I'm pretty sure it's a teenager in Russia doing this," Hypponen said.

Even though the worm does no real damage to infected computers, what makes it dangerous is its ability to dupe users into executing the file, thinking it will lead to a valid Web site.

"Most people have no idea that .COM is not just part of Web addresses, but is also an executable file extension," Hypponen said.

Anti-virus specialist Trend Micro gave the bug a medium risk rating. Security firms said that, compared with past e-mail worms, such as Nimda and Sircam, the number of reported "My Party" infections thus far is moderate.

The virus arrives as an e-mail with the subject line "new photos from my party!" It contains an innocuous looking file attachment called www.myparty.yahoo.com.

A message in the body of the e-mail reads: "Hello! My party... It was absolutely amazing! I have attached my web page with new photos! If you can please make color prints of my photos. Thanks!"

Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for Sophos Anti-Virus, said because it carries what appears to be an authentic link from the popular Web portal Yahoo, and appears to come from a colleague or friend, the worm has the potential to spread quickly.

Sophos received reports of infection from corporate clients and academic institutions in Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

The Web site of UK-based e-mail security service provider MessageLabs indicated that it had detected nearly 1,000 copies of the worm but that number dropped to fewer than 100 later in the day.

Sophos has devised a patch at:

<http://www.sophos.com/virusinfo/analyzes/w32mypartya.html> and anti-virus software from other companies, including F-Secure and McAfee.com, also detect the virus.

Apple Debuts 1-Gigahertz Chip, Ships First iMacs

Apple Computer Inc. on Monday rolled out its first computer with microchips running at 1 gigahertz, breaking a psychological barrier of sorts, and also began shipping its new hit, the iMac entry desktop system.

Apple said that it had a 150,000 orders in hand for the desk-lamp shaped iMac, which has a flat screen that appears to float in the air in front of a white hemispherical base and has stirred waves of applause for its unusual design.

Apple introduced the new iMac earlier on Jan. 7 but left untouched its professional line of desktop computers, the Power Mac, which were not much more powerful than the new entry-level line.

The company addressed that speed parity on Monday with new PowerPC G4 chips that boast a clock speed of 1 gigahertz, or 1 billion cycles per second.

''Some psychological barrier is passed," said Greg Joswiak, senior director of products at Apple.

A Power Mac G4 with two 1-gigahertz chips costs \$2,999, without a monitor.

Intel Corp. recently crossed the 2 gigahertz barrier with its Pentium chip, but clock speed is just one component of performance, a subject chip makers are notorious for squabbling over. Apple says its Power Macs are faster than a Pentium 4 chip running at 2 gigahertz, for instance.

Apple also knocked \$100 off the price of the entry-level Power Mac, dropping it to \$1,599, as well as bumping up the speed. Analysts have said Apple aims to gain market share as well as encourage longtime fans to buy a new machine faster than they otherwise would.

Joswiak said that customers who had left the Apple fold appeared to be coming back, lured by aggressive pricing and Apple's new operating system, OS X, and a suite of free multimedia products, like a photo organizer and digital music jukebox.

''Anecdotally it has been something we haven't seen in a few years," he said.

Windows 2000 Security Fixes Released

Microsoft on Wednesday issued an important collection of security fixes for Windows 2000.

The release of the 17MB downloadable Windows 2000 Security Rollup Package (SRP1) comes as Microsoft steps up its emphasis on security. In an e-mail to Microsoft's 47,000 employees earlier this month, Chairman Bill Gates called for putting security ahead of adding new features to products.

Among the fixes: several denial-of-service and buffer-overflow patches, telnet and file-transfer protocol tweaks and authentication-error repairs, among others.

SRP1 is a cumulative collection of security fixes released since Microsoft issued Windows 2000 Service Pack 2 in May. Service packs are collections of fixes and enhancements periodically released for Windows. Service Pack 3 for Windows 2000 is currently in beta testing.

Given the increased emphasis on security, and the amount of time since the last service, the release of the security fixes is appropriate, say analysts.

"I think it's good, but how well it's accepted depends on how much the word gets out," Technology Business Research analyst Bob Sutherland said.

In October, Microsoft unveiled the Strategic Technology Protection program, for the purpose of getting out consolidated security fixes to its customers. At the same time, the company said that with the release of Service Pack 3, it would significantly beef up Windows 2000's security features and the OS's capability to receive new updates.

The newer Windows XP, by contrast, already has built-in plumbing that lets the system quickly receive security and bug fixes. With the new OS, officially launched Oct. 25, Microsoft made the Windows Update feature more automatic. With older Windows versions, including 2000, people had to go out to a Web site to retrieve enhancements or fixes. With XP, updates can be retrieved automatically and installed when the user is ready.

Microsoft's ability to quickly deliver timely security fixes or updates for Windows 2000 could be crucial for thousands of businesses deploying the operating system. While XP is gaining ground with consumers, businesses are holding to their Windows 2000 adoption plans. Gartner estimates that only about 16 percent of PCs sold to businesses this year will have XP; more than 40 percent are expected to pack Windows 2000.

Still, Microsoft faces a host of challenges as it tries to knuckle down on security. The company has been besieged with a host of recent glitches affecting Excel and PowerPoint, secure digital content, Windows XP and Internet Explorer, among other products.

But security experts and analysts praised Microsoft's newfound emphasis on security.

"Microsoft's announcement they're all about security is definitely reflective of the final acknowledgement they have serious problems both internally and externally," Sutherland said.

Two Industry Groups Plan Anti-Spam Measures

Two business groups are rolling out plans that would give Internet users

greater control over the flood of junk e-mail crowding their inboxes.

Both groups aim to separate responsible marketing pitches from the ``spam" that enrages consumers and prompts calls for federal regulation.

Truste, a nonprofit group that promotes Internet privacy standards, will introduce a system Thursday that stamps commercial e-mail with a digital postmark that verifies that the sender complies with its privacy standards.

Meanwhile, the Direct Marketing Association plans to introduce guidelines for its members next Monday that would require them to comply with a ``do not contact" list of e-mail addresses, similar to a list the trade group maintains for telemarketers.

The DMA has maintained the e-mail list for about two years but until now compliance for members has been voluntary.

While both systems would regulate the e-mail communications of member companies, they would have no control over spammers who choose not to comply.

``We're adding trust and confidence to good e-mail, we're not solving spam yet," said Vincent Schiavone, president and chief executive of ePrivacy Group, which developed the Truste technology.

Spam has been a hot-button issue since at least the early 1990s, when mainstream Internet users began to find it impossible to stop offers for university diplomas, high-interest loans and pornography from popping up in their inboxes.

Spam frustrates Internet service providers as well, who say the millions of messages clog their servers.

The new DMA regulations, approved at a board meeting two weekends ago, would require member companies to allow consumers to prevent firms from sharing their personal information with third parties, and prevent the company from e-mailing them any more messages.

Members would also have to include a street address in their messages, said Pat Faley, vice president of ethics and consumer affairs at the DMA.

``What we're doing is codifying what are the standard business practices that are ethically acceptable," Faley said.

Truste's system, called Postiva, would place a unique digital ``stamp" on each piece of outgoing e-mail that would verify the sender's identity.

The stamp would ensure that the company does not engage in deceptive practices, such as using a fake return address or a subject line that does not match the body of the text.

It would also tell the recipient that the company measures up to Truste's privacy standards, similar to those of the DMA.

Truste Executive Director Fran Maier said the system would simplify Internet users' lives by allowing them to distinguish legitimate commercial e-mail from spam.

``This is something they don't have now, and we think it's very powerful," Maier said.

Privacy activist Jason Catlett said the system could provide a way to cut down on errors in e-mail marketing but would not address the larger problem of spam.

''Because it's a voluntary program, it's not going to stop the vast majority of unscrupulous spammers who are only going to be stopped by the law," said Catlett, CEO of Junkbusters Corp.

Spam could only be fought by allowing individual e-mail users to sue for damages, he said.

Eighteen U.S. states have passed laws regulating commercial e-mail; a California law allowing Internet users to sue spammers was recently upheld in a state appeals court.

But efforts to pass national anti-spam legislation have not fared as well.

A House of Representatives committee stripped out a clause in an anti-spam bill last spring that would have allowed individuals to sue after the DMA said it opposed such an approach.

FTC to Crack Down on Deceptive Junk E-Mail

The federal government is planning for the first time to go after ''spammers" who swamp Internet users with deceptive e-mail offers, a Federal Trade Commission (FTC) official said on Thursday.

The FTC will announce enforcement actions as early as next week against online marketers who use deceptive claims in their e-mail pitches, said J. Howard Beales, director of the FTC's enforcement bureau.

It will be the first time the consumer-protection agency has specifically targeted spammers in an investigation, Beales told Reuters.

''We're interested in the spams where the message itself is deceptive. We think if that went away there would be a whole lot less spam in the world, and that's a place to start," Beales told Reuters.

Spam has long been a hot-button issue for Internet users, who often find their inboxes clogged with unsolicited offers for pornography, fake diplomas, and get-rich-quick schemes.

Currently 18 states regulate commercial e-mail, but attempts to pass a national antispam law have stumbled over opposition from direct marketers who say their activities would be unfairly limited.

The FTC will use existing laws banning false or deceptive trade practices to go after spammers, Beales said.

''There's an enormous range of stuff where what they're trying to tell you is essentially fraudulent," he said.

The agency will target spammers who offer consumers the ability to opt out of their e-mail lists but instead bombard them with more junk e-mail when they respond, he said.

Pyramid schemes, get-rich-quick opportunities, chain letters, and other common online scams will be targeted as well, he said.

Spammers who use fake return addresses will not be a priority at first, he said.

Spammers are not likely to face large fines from FTC actions. In deceptive-trade cases, the agency can usually only force companies to give back profits they made through deceptive means, or pursue "structural" remedies that modify future behavior.

AOL Shuts Out Users In Battle Over IM

America Online is blocking people using Trillian software from linking to its AOL Instant Messenger system. It's the latest move in a tug-of-war between the Web giant and the start-up.

People using the popular Trillian software may lose access to part of AOL Time Warner's instant messaging system.

Firing another salvo in the battle over instant messaging, America Online is blocking people using the Trillian interface from linking to its AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) system.

Trillian, which allows people to access multiple instant messaging programs from one screen, has attracted nearly a million people who are hoping to streamline their use of incompatible systems, including AOL's AIM and ICQ, Yahoo's Messenger and Microsoft's MSN Messenger.

But in the past 24 hours, an elaborate game of cat and mouse has developed between AOL and Trillian creator Cerulean Studios--as the start-up has repeatedly released new software designed to get around the block, prompting AOL to rush in and stop people from using it.

Meanwhile, Trillian fans are snared in cross fire.

"AOL is being selfish," Trillian user Mike Cicciarelli said in an instant messaging exchange with News.com.

Trillian user Chris Hilbert said he's downloaded new software several times in the past day in an attempt to re-establish access with AIM. Hilbert said he uses Trillian because it's simple.

"I like that there are no ads, less bloat," said Hilbert, an Indiana University student and creator of the FileFlash Web site. "I don't have to have four different clients open."

But AOL said it's a matter of security and is framing the conflict as yet another chapter in the instant messaging wars. In recent years, AOL has clashed with other makers of IM software, including Microsoft and AT&T. Both companies tried to create systems that let people correspond with AIM users--only to have them blocked.

"It has long been our very public policy that when a service unleashes software that hacks into our system, and endangers the security of our system, we stop it," AOL spokeswoman Kathy McKiernan said.

McKiernan said that Trillian does not have a business relationship with AOL. "To the extent that consumers think they do, they were misled," McKiernan said.

Meanwhile, the creators of Trillian plan to keep up the tit-for-tat efforts. Since AOL first started blocking the software Tuesday, they have released one workaround and at least two more full downloads of Trillian.

Michael Gartenberg, a research director at Jupiter Media Metrix, called AOL's practice "predatory," but he said at least the media behemoth is consistent in blocking both large and small companies from accessing its system.

"There are no technical reasons they can't open up IM, but there are a lot of business reasons not to," Gartenberg said. "They're not going to unless they're forced to."

Odd Todd Cartoon Hits Chord with Dot-Com Refugees

10:30 a.m. -- Wake up. 10:45 -- Goof off on computer. 11:17 -- Eat fudge-striped cookies and Pringles. 11:30 -- Watch television. 12:30 -- Watch more TV. 16:00 -- Power nap. 18:00 -- Still napping.

Such is a day in the life of Odd Todd, a fictional dot-com refugee who lives on the Internet and whose following is growing among the legions of discarded dot-com workers.

While cartoon character Dilbert spends his days in an office cubicle, Odd Todd spends much of his time at home napping, searching -- unsuccessfully -- for a job or get-quick rich scheme, and watching TV.

The raspy voiced online cartoon character is based on the real-life experiences of his creator, Todd Rosenberg, who was laid off in June from his job in business development at an online distributor of short films.

Rosenberg, 32, decided to spend some of his now plentiful free time creating a short animated film, "Laid Off: A Day In the Life." Little did he know the animated short would strike such a resonant chord with the legions of other dot-comers who were served pink slips.

"I've received thousands of e-mails from people, basically accusing me of spying on them (because the short reflects their life so closely)," Rosenberg said in an interview. "They seem very appreciative of the fact that the illusion of a lifestyle of someone who doesn't have a job is out there."

The number of jobless dot-comers has grown steadily since the Internet bubble burst in the spring of 2000, leaving many 20- and 30-somethings who never had to contend with an economic slowdown looking for a new source of income and ways to fill their free time.

The outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc. said nearly 2 million jobs were lost in 2001, with about 1.2 million coming from e-commerce, media and computer companies.

It's hard to turn into humor, but somehow, Odd Todd's plight connects to the masses. For instance: The time he finally finds the motivation to leave

his home, only to realize he needs money to get the things he wants -- whether it be ice cream or women.

''When you're looking for a job, there's not much you can do over the course of one day. You have all this free time. I think it was a relief because it shows they aren't the only ones out there burning time in this way."

The film has raised more than \$7,000 through an electronic tips jar that sits on the site and the site has been visited by more than 1 million unique visitors, Rosenberg said.

The day starts off with some time toiling away at the computer, trying to connect with the world and trying to figure out what to do about ''this no-work, no-money situation."

A couple of Pringles, cookies and TV shows later, Todd tries to dream up a scam to make money and fantasizes about winning the lottery.

''I decided I was going to write like a movie, but after a half page or so I got kinda bored and I found out it's really hard to write a whole movie," Odd Todd says in the film.

Then he has a panic attack and worries about being left with no choice but to live on the streets in a cardboard box or move in with his parents -- back into his room filled with sports pennants and Def Leppard posters.

By mid-afternoon, he finally gets motivated enough to go outside, but realizes ''outside is kinda hard when you have no money."

Rosenberg, who was a struggling cartoonist even during the dot-com boom, said his attempts to look for employment after being laid off were fraught with difficulties.

''I went on a few interviews for jobs that were in the neighborhood of half of what I was making before. And three out of four (places) had layoffs before any decision was made, so there really wasn't anyplace for me to go," Rosenberg said. "This will hopefully lead to some career change that is better suited for me."

Presently working on a second episode for February that continues the saga of unemployed Odd Todd, he aims to have a new one every six weeks thereafter.

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